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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 001925

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SA/INS
LONDON FOR POL - RIEDEL

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [NP](#) [GON](#)

SUBJECT: NEPALI PM ASKS KING TO POSTPONE ELECTIONS

REF: A. (A) KATHMANDU 1901

[¶](#)B. (B) KATHMANDU 1781

Classified By: AMB MICHAEL E. MALINOWSKI. REASON: 1.5 (B,D).

[¶](#)1. (C) Sources at the Palace have informed the Ambassador that on October 3 Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, citing the King's broadly worded authority under Clause 127 of the Constitution to remedy "difficulties" arising in the implementation of the Constitution, requested King Gyanendra to postpone mid-term elections scheduled for November 13. The Prime Minister was acting on the all-party recommendation, formulated September 30, that the security situation is too perilous to permit elections at this time (Ref A). The Palace said the King will consult with Constitutional experts and leaders of other political parties before responding to the request. The same source indicated that the King will likely meet with the Ambassador October 4.

(Note: The King met with former Opposition Leader Madhav Nepal and former Prime Minister G.P. Koirala October 2. End note.) A source at the Prime Minister's Office has told us that the PM requested the polling date be deferred until November 19, 2003.

[¶](#)2. (C) Comment: There appears to be a substantial difference of expert opinion regarding the legality of postponing elections. The King is thus well advised to seek the opinion of Constitutional experts before acting. Members of other political parties--including the Communist Party of Nepal - United Marxist Leninist (UML)--have told us their party would participate in an interim government--even one headed by the Prime Minister. The notable exception is long-time Deuba rival and former Prime Minister G.P. Koirala, who rescinded his party's endorsement of the all-party recommendation a mere one day after it was issued. If all other political parties jump on the interim government bandwagon--and start divvying up the more desirable portfolios--G.P. may well find himself isolated.

MALINOWSKI